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INCIDENTS AND REFLECTIONS
IN VERSE.

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INCIDENTS AND REFLECTIONS

In Verse.

BY

EDWARD STEPHENS.

CAMBRIDGE;
PUBLISHED BY E. JOHNSON.

1845.

CAMBRIDGE:

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TO RICHARD FOSTER, ESQ.

Dear Sir,

For the permission so kindly granted me to inscribe to you the following collection of Poems, I beg your acceptance of my sincere thanks.

I gladly avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded me, to record my deep sense of your farther kindness in undertaking to inspect the MS. of the volume, and of the improvement in the several pieces composing it, derived from your emendatory suggestions.

That you may long be permitted to occupy the important position in which Divine Providence has placed you, with the same honour and usefulness with which you have for so many years filled it, is the sincere wish and prayer of,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged and grateful Serrant,

EDWARD STEPHENS.

Fulbourn, January 1st, 1845.

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INCIDENTS AND REFLECTIONS.

THE NONCONFORMIST'S GRAVE.

Down where the weeping willow bends,
In mournful silence, its recumbent form ;
Or where the tow'ring oak's gray top ascends,
And bids defiance to the raging storm :
Or where the soaring lark pours forth her lay
In sweetest melody of warbling song,
Where mountain-tops reflect the golden ray,
Or brooks meander verdant meads among :
Upon the summit of some lofty peak,
Whose dizzy height o'erlooks the boundless sea ;
Whilst blust'ring winds their mystic language speak,
And foaming billows struggle to be free :

Or on the margin of the limpid stream,
Whose glitt'ring spray fantastic curvets make ;
In the deep glen where sunbeams seldom gleam,
Or on the bosom of the silv'ry lake :

Amidst such scenes I love to pass the hour
Congenial to the contemplative mood,
To view the wonders of Almighty pow'r,
And read in all that God is wise and good.

Not less I love to wander near the spot
Where rest the ashes of the truly brave ;
To trace in thought the Nonconformist's lot,
And drop a tear upon his peaceful grave.

No sculptur'd tomb points out his resting-place,
Nor epitaph invites the measured pause ;
And time has scarcely left a single trace
To mark the hallowed spot of his repose.

And yet tradition points him resting there,*
Where Spring brings forth her earliest fav'rite flow'rs
To weave for him fresh garlands ev'ry year,
Which neither human strife nor time devours.

* Harper, the first pastor of the Baptist Church now worshipping in St. Andrew's Street Chapel, Cambridge, whom tradition records to have been buried at Fulbourn, in one of the private burial-grounds, of which there are in this village not fewer than seven or eight.

Sweet is the mem'ry of the pious dead,
And oh, how sweet the record of their deeds !
These round their names a living glory shed,
Before whose lustre earthly pomp recedes.

He whose cold ashes sleep beneath that sod,
Acquired on earth imperishable fame,
By deeds of love to man and zeal for God,
And grateful memory has embalmed his name.

“OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY.”

How oft were the servants of God,
In times less auspicious than ours,
Compell'd far to wander abroad,
Where the beast of the forest devours.

Where the bittern and cormorant roam,
Instinctive, in search of their prey ;
Where humanity owns not a home,
And the stillness of night rules the day.

In dens and in caves oft immured,
On the mountain's bleak summit exposed,
To hunger and suffering inured,
By malice and hatred opposed.

Religion alone was their crime,
And the freedom of conscience their claim ;
From their kindred, their country, and clime,
For these they were hunted and slain.

Committing themselves to His hand
Whom angels delight to obey,
Whose sceptre shall rule ev'ry land
Till all enemies yield to his sway.

His righteous commands they obey'd,
Nor murmur'd, though painful their lot ;
But in all their deportment display'd
The spirit the world knoweth not.

They knew Him, and loved Him above
Ev'ry object this world could present ;
And, impell'd by the ardour of love,
They follow'd wherever he went.

Their lives they no longer esteem'd
Than their safety agreed with his claim ;
Their superlative honour they deem'd
To suffer and die for His Name.

They suffer'd and died for His Name,
As lambs by the wolf made a prey ;
And the world has forgotten their fame
In the whirl of their mirth and display.

Yet how blest were these servants of God,
Tho' bereft of all earthly delight !
How safely the path which they trod,
Led on to those regions of light,

Where the sorrows of this passing scene
Shall brighten the crowns of the blest,
And the labours and pains that have been,
A hundred-fold sweeten their rest.

And when the bright cloud shall appear,
And the Ancient of Days on His throne ;
When the nations shall tremble with fear,
And the heav'ns like a scroll shall be gone.

The Judge from his throne shall proclaim,
And all nations the sentence shall hear,—
"These are they that have follow'd the Lamb,
And I to redeem them appear."

It is easily seen that the conduct described in the above lines is as much in keeping with the genius and spirit of Christianity as it is in contrast to that set forth in the following verses. Whatever may be urged, on the ground of humanity, in excuse of those who have been induced by its violence to resist persecution, by having recourse to arms, it is certain that their conduct cannot be defended on Christian grounds.

The New Testament knows of nothing but a patient endurance of evil for righteousness' sake, coupled with the employment of spiritual weapons for the overthrow of this, as of all other, strongholds of Satan.

THE CAMISSARD CHIEF'S ADDRESS TO HIS
BRETHREN.

HAIL, ye Camissards, whose fathers are sleeping,
On the lap of their country, the sleep of the brave ;
O list to the wail which your mothers are weeping
O'er the ashes of those they have lost in the grave.

By diligent search, in heav'n's guidance confiding,
Thro' the deepwinding forest, o'er mountain and slope
Have I found you at length in the place of your hiding,
Overcome by fatigue, yet buoyant with hope.

In the stillness of night, when deep sleep falls on men,
A form in a vision appear'd to my view,
Unearthly amazement came over me then,
And a dampness suffus'd me like cold morning dew.

Oh, stern was that look ! it search'd thro' my spirit,
Like the dread glance of conscience awaken'd by
crime ;

I felt the alarm of uncertain demerit ;
What sequel it boded I durst not divine.

But the scene quickly changed like the parts of a
dream

Whose actors are hid from the view of the mind ;
Its aspect no longer forbidding did seem,
But tho' earnest, benignant, persuasive, and kind.

"Now mark me," said he ! (for I knew my lost father),
"No longer, disguised, in concealment remain ;
Go forth and around thee thy scatter'd friends gather,
Avenge ye ! avenge ye, the blood of the slain !"

"Theshield of the Lord and the tried 'sword of Gideon,'
Await thee, anointed thy brethren to shield :
Fear not ! heav'n's smile shall be both thy guerdon
And thy tow'r of defence in the fierce battle-field."

Why droop thus your heads ? why shrink ye like
traitors ?

Is the blood of your sires congeal'd in your veins ?
Hath your heart ceas'd to throb for the wrongs of your
kindred,

And have ye no ear when your country complains ?

Nay, more ! hath your zeal for the honour of Zion,
Like the rose-bud of summer, been struck by the
blast ?

Where now are the hopes ye were wont to rely on ;
So long fondly cherish'd, have they fail'd you at last ?

The tyrant's abroad, like the beast of the forest,
All rampant and eager to seize on the prey :
Our people, pursued by his minions, have no rest,
No respite of suffering by night nor by day.

From the homes of their childhood they're fled to the
mountains,
With the bittern to consort, with the wild deer to rove;
Forsaken and lost are the crystalline fountains,
Whence they drew the sweet waters of innocent love.

Profaned are the Temples where fervent devotion,
Unalloy'd by earth's pomp, and unsullied by fear ;
And the sweet savour'd incense of holy emotion
Ascended to heav'n from hearts all sincere.

Where now are those scenes of domestic endearment,
Your pride and your boast, the joy of your heart ?
Ah ! thither the bigoted proud Cavalier went,
And all your bright visions like shadows depart.

His flint-hearted troopers lay waste those possessions,
Which bountiful Heav'n to industry gave ;
Your cots, fragrant groves, and your smiling plantations,
Ay, your father-land now, must deny you a grave.

And for what ? hath the triple-dyed sin of sedition,
Have murder and rapine and treason combined,
Brought down on your heads God's just retribution,
And your names to reproach, thro' all ages consign'd ?

Ah, no ! let our tyrants themselves be the judges,
For no crime are we hunted o'er mountain and moor :
Our freedom of conscience the bigot begrudges,
We would not resign it—our guilt is no more.

And shall we now yield ? By the dust of our fathers,
By their patient endurance, we never will yield !
Persecution around us now rapidly gathers,
For conscience, for freedom, then, take we the field.

To arms ye Camissards ! acquit you like freemen
Whose fathers ne'er buckled the yoke of the slave :
Now take ye the field, confront ye the foemen,
Disgrace not your sires, O ye sons of the brave !*

* The Huguenots, like all others who have taken up arms in the defence of their religious principles and rights, were in the habit of considering their situation to be *literally* analogous to that of the Israelites in the wilderness ; and of deducing the rules of their conduct from this supposed analogy. The fallacy of their reasoning, and the inconsistency of their conduct in resorting to arms at all for such a purpose, are exposed by the Saviour in his answer to Pilate : “ My kingdom is not of this world ; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

MORNING REFLECTIONS.

Now, lead-eyed Morpheus, from thine arms set free,
 Till hour of rest return, adieu to thee !
 Tho' thousands yet in sluggish soft repose,
 Enchanted slaves thy downy wings enclose :
 Where the rapt lark pours forth her joyous lay,
 And nature's songsters hail the rising day,
 Forth let me haste to catch the healthful breeze,
 Which wildly murmurs 'mongst the waving trees;
 E'en now its balmy influence I feel
 Thro' ev'ry pore with healing virtue steal;
 Life's circling fluid owns its genial sway,
 And night's dank vapours hast'ning flee away.

While some seek vigour from superfluous rest,
 Or drain the jovial bowl with fatal zest,
 Give me the jocund breeze, the morning air,
 Whose fairy legions, gay and debonair,
 The silver cords of life and health sustain,
 And regulate their pulse thro' ev'ry vein.
 More efficacious far it stands confest
 Than all the drugs which store the chemist's chest,
 Th' exhausted pow'rs of nature to restore,
 And thro' the frame a healthful vigour pour.

Ye votaries of pleasure, pamper'd slaves,
Who strew with thorns the pathway to your graves,
Whose fatal skill contrives a thousand ways
At once t' embitter and abridge your days ;
Alternate worshippers of two fell gods,
Whose magic sceptres turn to iron rods ;
Who first beguile their dupes with promise fair,
Then plunge their victims headlong in despair ;
Have ye no omens of their fatal power
To blast your comfort and your lives devour ?—
The bloodshot eye, the fever'd aching brow,
The boding throb and life's unequal flow,
The listless yawn, th' emaciate vapid frame,
The trembling hand, and ills without a name ;
These are the demons that compose their train,
These are the fruits of their voluptuous reign.
Th' inspiring draught a pow'rful charm conceals,
Which quickly spreads and ev'ry fibre feels ;
Renew'd potations feed the growing fire,
Each fresh supply augments the warm desire ;
The subtile nerves diffus'd throughout the frame,
Receive the influence of the spreading flame :
Acute their sense, their sympathy complete,
Each one reverberates the other's beat :
Strained to their utmost pow'r with thrill intense,
A high-toned pleasure gratifies the sense.

The cause withdrawn, th' effect full soon subsides,
Or if prolong'd, a worse event betides :
The moral sense forthwith begins to reel;
The understanding next tript up at heel,
In quick succession all the pow'rs of mind
Depart, and leave a brawling sot behind.
By fumes of wassail more than three parts dead,
The carcase crawls, or tumbles into bed ;
Legions of demons revel in the brains,
While life some modicum of strength regains,
And hideous dreams affright th' awaking mind,
As yet half conscious, and as yet half blind :
With doubtful steps thro' unknown paths it roams,
Sees nought but goblins, hears no sound but groans.
Long ere the stupor has relax'd its hold,
The clock has half its daily number told :
The sun has gleam'd across the southern skies
Ere yet the wretched thing has pow'r to rise.
At length awaken'd by his dreamy fears,
His swollen eyes half starting from their spheres,
With trembling limb he strives to reach the ground,
Shrinks from himself, and starts at ev'ry sound.
The tasteless meal his squeamish stomach spurns,
An inward fever thro' his system burns ;
Abroad he seeks some respite of his woes,
" Blue devils " haunt him wheresoe'er he goes.

His prostrate spirits no relief obtain,
He flees the world, and seeks his cups again.

Think ye this giddy whirl can last for aye,
The night's debauch, and fever'd sleep by day?
Think ye life's brittle thread will always bear
Such constant friction and unceasing tear?
Would ye be hale and cheerful? first be wise,
Throw off the yoke, your vassalage despise;
No more approach to worship at their shrine,
The god of slumber and the god of wine.

THE DANDELION.

Soon as stern Winter's broken chains

Release the opening year,

Ere Flora's train bestud the plains,

Or primroses appear ;

There blooms a flower not much observ'd,

Of slender growth and form ;

Tho' by no walls enclosed, preserv'd

From ev'ry winter storm.

Upon the sunny bank it grows

In solitary state,

'Mongst with'ring leaves and shatter'd boughs,

Or near the garden gate.

Amidst the desolation drear,

The relics of the blast,

It heralds in the new-born year,

And tells us Winter's past.

It seems, with cheering smile to say,

“Lo, Nature is not dead,

But only sleeps ; soon, robed and gay,

She'll quit her slumb'ring bed.”

Its golden blossoms kiss the breeze,
And, opening to the sun,
Receive the dew-drops from the trees,
And flourish most at noon.

And when its blooming days are o'er,
A head of softest down
Sits where the blossoms sat before,
A beauteous snow-white crown.

This head of down, unloosed anon,
Floats gaily on the air,
Until some cleft receives the germ
Which greets the following year.

Tho' sober'd by experience now,
And changes oft unkind,
And time's rough hand has mark'd our brow;
Yet can we call to mind

How oft in childhood's happy reign
Its pliant stem supplied,
Link after link, the circling chain,
To deck the mimic bride.

And even now we hail with joy
Its shining yellow hue,
Bright harbinger of sunny days
And skies o'erhung with blue.

Thus things of little moment share,
In common with the great,
Indulgent Heaven's protective care,
Tho' low and mean their state.

And thus, too, things of little note,
And sometimes things despised,
Conspire man's comfort to promote
Not less than those more prized.

The Dandelion, lowly born,
From Flora's train displaced,
May teach vain-glorious man his scorn
May, sometimes be misplaced.

THE COTTAGE PRAYER MEETING.

SWEET is the hour when, lowly bow'd
Before the Mercy-seat,
A few divided from the crowd
Their pious vows repeat.

How calm and peaceful is the scene,
And not a sound is heard,
Save prayer and praise from hearts serene,
Or when one reads the Word.

The jealous pang, the envious heart,
Find not a harbour there ;
Nor proud Ambition's wily part,
Nor earth's corroding care.

But mutual confidence and love,
Goodwill and sympathy,
Inspire each heart, whilst from above
They seek divine supply.

In ardent songs of grateful praise
For mercies hourly given,
With one accord their notes they raise,
And send their thoughts to heav'n.

Each bosom there itself unveils,
Reveals its inmost grief,
Low at His feet, who never fails
To send a quick relief.

His presence heals the broken heart,
The troubled spirit cheers;
Like oil, allays the inward smart,
And drives away their fears.

Their faith is one—their hope the same,
They share a holy glow;
They trust in the Redeemer's name,
And heav'n begins below.

THE SABBATH MORNING.

HAIL, triumphant Sabbath morn !
Day on which our hope was born :
Now the lark is on the wing,
I would thy bright rising sing.

Weekly monitor of rest,
Thou art welcome to my breast ;
Foretaste thou of rest above,
Sabbath of eternal love.

Day more honour'd than the rest ;
Day of days supremely blest ;
Day that saw the Lord arise
From the tomb to mount the skies.

Crown of thorns no longer now
Sits encircling on His brow ;
Free from scorn and suff'ring, He
Rules o'er all immensity.

Seraphs bow before His throne,
Thousand worlds His sceptre own ;
Thousand worlds His glories sing,
Hail Him universal King.

O my soul, to heav'n aspire,
Join the anthem—catch the fire !
Winding thro' this dang'rous maze,
Mark the prize with steady gaze.

Bright and brighter, lo, it grows,
As the tide which onward flows
Time conveys thee nearer still,
Seize it with determin'd will.

Shortly will the summons come,
That shall call thee, wanderer, home :
Faithful to the end endure,
Fear not—thy reward is sure.

Then, O then, in heav'nly lays,
Thou shalt sing His glorious praise,
Fill'd with ardour, rapt with love,
In thy Father's house above !

“RETURN UNTO THY REST, O MY SOUL.”

CEASE, my soul, O cease to wander
From the centre of repose ;
Pause awhile, O pause and ponder
O'er the cause of all thy woes.

Oh, too long hast thou forsaken
God, the source of solid good :
Oh, too long hast thou mistaken
Dross for treasure, husks for food.

Madly hast thou sought enjoyment
From the world's polluted streams ;
Madly sought it in employment
Where it never sheds its beams.

False are those alluring pleasures
Which the multitude pursue ;
Empty toys, those glitt'ring treasures
Which they ever keep in view.

And that charm which warms and cheers them,
Urging on the madd'ning game,
Animates but to destroy them
With a never-dying flame.

Trace no more those dang'rous mazes,
Vainly seeking comfort where
The malignant foe amazes,
Or allures to black despair.

By the unchanging laws of nature,
Happiness can never come
To a self-deluded creature
Wand'ring from his God—his home.

Cease then, O my soul, to wander,
Turn again unto thy rest ;
See ! thy God invites thee yonder,
Hasten to Him, and be blest.

THE COW-BOY.

WHAT varied hues all human scenes display,
 Some dull, some bright, some tame, and others gay :
 But over all is cast a sombre shade,
 In every station and in every grade.

Poets may sing, and statesmen may debate,
 Of rustic innocence and hearts elate ;
 'Mongst fruitful fields, where human forms are found,
 Vice stalks abroad, and miseries abound.
 True, there are spots to variegate the scene,
 As deserts show some beauteous plots of green ;
 Refreshing contrasts here and there appear,
 With hope of better times the heart to cheer.

There needs not skill in metaphysic laws,
 To trace these evils to their proper cause :
 Philosophy may blush, and Pity weep,
 As facts disclose their sources dark and deep.
 The mind, alas ! receives a meager share
 Of needed culture and attentive care ;
 The precious jewel in the casket lies
 Forgotten, till its native lustre dies.

See where the hind conducts his motley drove,
 In flow'ry vales or verdant meads to rove :

These led, by instinct, never-erring guide,
Draw from the juicy pulp a nect'reous tide,
Which, when submitted to the dairy's art,
Supplies alike the larder and the mart.
Meanwhile their keeper, uninured to care,
As ample sides and ruddy cheeks declare,
In idle vacancy consumes the day,
And throws the precious spring of life away.
Can he recall the hours thus idly spent?
Will Nature's laws thus slighted yet relent,
And from th' abyss which nothing disembogues,
Throw back the space which idleness prorogues?
No! lost for ever is the precious gem,
Tho' costlier than the richest diadem;
Its worth, perceiv'd too late in riper years,
Can be but mourned with unavailing tears.
The noblest monument of fame shall die,
The mightiest monarch lay his sceptre by;
The everlasting hills shall be upriven,
And ocean from its deepest beds be driven;
The star-bespangled heav'ns shall flee away,
And endless night eclipse the solar day:
But from the deep enclosures of the past,
Are ne'er recall'd the moments thither cast.

O that, thro' early discipline, the mind
To books and meditation were inclined!

What bliss were his, from sources now unknown
Drawn at his ease, unscared by tyrant's frown!
The fleeting hours employ'd with frugal care,
Would yield the growing thought nutritious fare;
Expand the soul and cultivate the heart,
And aid that gen'rous growth in ev'ry part,
Which, when mature, presents the finish'd man,
To bless the race, and not to prove its ban.

His is the loss—but they must share the blame,
Who owe to fortune a more favour'd name!
Born 'midst her smiles, surrounded by her charms,
Nurs'd in her lap, and cradled in her arms;
Her chosen fav'rites born her gifts to share,
Sole objects of her unremitting care—
On them, its justice to dispute were vain,
On them the poor possess a righteous claim!
Their proud estates would laugh them soon to scorn,
And then relapse into a waste forlorn,
Did not the poor man live to dress the soil,
And aid the pow'rs of nature by his toil.

O England! strong in pow'r and rich in arts,
'Tis these supply thy coffers and thy marts.
Maintain thy weal alike when peace pervades,
And when thy shores the invidious foe invades.
Whilst they by ceaseless toil aggrandize thee,
And with their lives protect thy liberty,

Do thou, in just return, their wants relieve,
With due respect their common suit receive :
Learn to discharge thy debt, nor think it grace
At least t' instruct and train their rising race ;
Nor grudge the pittance scantily supplied
So late in time, its very eventide,
But in the ratio of thy past delay
Augment the boon, and wipe the stain away.

The uncultivated heath, the sterile waste,
Presents no beauty and displays no taste ;
A heterogeneous mass of weeds and thorns,
No useful plant its bosom e'er adorns :
The untaught mind displays a drearier scene,
To goodness alien, and thro' guilt unclean ;
There error spreads the darkness of the tomb,
And vice luxuriates in the awful gloom.

The poor man's child, the native of the soil,
Where sire and son alike are born to toil,
Tho' in a land where ev'ry art is found,
And means of knowledge everywhere abound,
Lives on unheeded by the rich and great,
If "ignorance is bliss," in happy state.
And true it is, did virtue only grow
Where coronets and mitres deck the brow,
That bliss had still been his, without alloy,
In all the fulness of unmeasured joy.

Hail to thy memory, immortal Raikes !
He much the genius of true worth mistakes,
The mark of real greatness fails to scan,
Who owns not thee a great and honour'd man.
Warm'd by the ardour of a nobler flame
Than that which fires the votary of fame,
Thy zeal essay'd the darkness to explore,
And bless th' untutor'd mind with heav'nly lore.
The man proclaims himself a graceless fool,
Whose tongue profanes the name of Sabbath-school :
Altho' the butt of ev'ry low buffoon,
The poor man's lot owns not a richer boon.

THE FIRST SMILE.

I WOULD not part, my much-loved one,
With this sweet thrill of pleasure,
For all the dust beneath the sun
Which misers call their treasure.

Oft have I watch'd thy infant lips,
The sight my cares beguiling,
More beauteous than the primrose tips,
Assume the form of smiling.

Assumed it was I knew, and yet
Could not but wish it real,
And long'd to see thy features set
Into the smile ideal.

And now upon thy curling lip,
The very smile sits playing ;
Thus to thy anxious parent's joy
The dawn of thought displaying.

Smile on, my babe ! and be thy life
Unruffled by a sorrow :
Oh, be the joys of ev'ry day
Increas'd by ev'ry morrow !

STANZAS.

THERE is a nameless pain,
Which mortals often feel :
All have some reason to complain,
Tho' few have skill to heal.

Once let the Muse prescribe,
And be her words obey'd ;
She asks for neither fee nor bribe,
Comply, and she is paid.

When this tormenter steals
O'er your incautious heart,
And Nature's utmost effort fails
To force him to depart ;

The remedy you need
Must by yourself be found ;
Then search it out with cautious speed,
But shun forbidden ground.

Court not the mountain breeze,
To chase your dole away ;
Nor seek redress 'mongst groves and trees,
Where sportive zephyrs play.

Ask not the feather'd tribe
To minister relief,
Their warbling mirth will but deride
Your half-dissembled grief.

Nor seek it 'midst the scenes
To which the gay repair,
Where Hope's illusion only, gleams
To lure them to despair.

Go to the widow's cot,
And wipe the falling tear ;
Compassionate the orphan's lot,
And make his wants your care.

Go where the mourner pines,
With sympathetic breast ;
Afford relief where hope declines,
And give the weary rest.

Go where the suff'rer lies,
The victim of disease ;
Learn your demerit from his cries,
And strive to prize your ease.

As near the mountain's base,
The mole-hill nothing seems ;
Or as the fading star retires
Before the sun's bright beams ;

The contrast will expel
The demon from your breast ;
Or charm as by a magic spell,
The murd'rer of your rest.

A WISH,

ON THE OCCASION TO WHICH IT RELATES.

WITH smiles may kind heav'n look down on your nuptials
And breathe the sweet fragrance of peace from above;
May you both feel impress'd on the heart the credentials,
With unmingled delight, of reciprocal love!

Beth the plight of your hands the true pledge of affection,
Which nothing shall mar, which shall never decay;
Of love, which shall bear the stern glance of reflection,
Nor shrink from the test on each 'nuptial day.'

Joint-heirs may you be of the Kingdom of Heav'n,
And on earth whilst you sojourn, may God be your
guide;
May His grace in your hearts, the all-hallowing leav'n,
The richest possession, for ever abide.

May blessings descend on you both without number,
Like the dew soft and balmy on cinnamon groves:
More blithsome than Spring, and more steady than
Summer,

Be the joys of your wedlock, the tide of your loves.

May storms of distress never light on your dwelling,
Nor corrosions of care ever mar your repose;
May you never know aught of affliction's heart swelling,
And may Heav'n protect you from fears and from foes.

Thro' the journey of life, ever changeful and winding,
Be your skies all serene, and your sun ever bright;
May you know the true comfort of mutual confiding,
Of sentiments pure and transparent as light.

And yet—for on earth who can hope for perfection?
Should the rose have a thorn, and some bitter the
sweet,

May you mutually seek and enjoy His protection,
Whose love will afford you a timely retreat.

CUSTOM.

TIME-CHARTER'D customs boast more pow'r than laws,
 Which wield th' imperial fiat in each clause :
 Based on some passion of the human mind,
 An easy passage thro' the mass they find ;
 Till what at first seemed meant but for a day,
 Lives on and grows to universal sway.
 So winds the river from its gurgling source,
 And at each stage acquires fresh depth and force ;
 Till the¹ mere rivulet becomes a flood,
 Whose mighty current cannot be withstood.

Customs, alas ! to different issues tend,
 Their influence, some to virtue, some to vice extend ;
 The major part are instruments of ill
 On an extensive scale : the public will,
 Sway'd by their magic pow'r, becomes enslaved,
 And oft is render'd tenfold more depraved ;
 The sport of passion's desolating storms,
 The slave of lust in its most hideous forms.

Take one example. Hark ! the village bells,
 Whose varying peal upon the zephyr swells,
 "Proclaim," say you, "a banquet for the mind,
 The 'feast of fat things, and of wines refined.'"

Be not mistaken: true, 'tis sabbath eve,
Well might the farce an honest mind deceive :
'Those bells, long ere the sacred hours have run,
Announce the annual revelry begun.
Long-sever'd kin and friends at distance placed,
Flock from all parts, these social joys to taste,
Each flush'd with hope to find a welcome share,
And bid adieu, for once at least, to care.

In frequent groups they seek th' enchanted ground,
And shouts of mirth are echo'd far around :
Young men and maidens from all points advance,
To peer at sights, or join the rustic dance.
The painted mimic, with distorted face,
Fantastic gestures, and absurd grimace,
Profusely show'rs his glittering gewgaws,
And from the rustic band draws forth applause;
Then from their pockets he abstracts their pence,
The price of mirth raised at their own expence.

Science and art combine their eyes to bless,
With different skill and various success:
Wond'ring they see, compressed within a show,
The bloody field and feats of Waterloo;
Bombarded towns and cities in a blaze,
And hostile fleets in action meet their gaze ;
London in all its pomp salutes their eyes,
Whilst Moscow at their feet in ruin lies.

Aloft, suspended in the yielding air,
Groups of young children—aye, and many a pair
Of older children : round and round they go,
To test their pow'r of wind, and help them grow.

On uprights fix'd, at measured distance placed,
The farthing toy, in glitt'ring gilt encased,
Invites a group to combat for the prize,
And all devour it with their ravish'd eyes.
The missiles hurl'd—each one has missed his aim ;
They try again—again they fare the same ;
Three throws a penny yield them one chance more,
And all, save one, succeed as heretofore :
Flush'd with success, the joyful victor flies
And claims his pennyworth—a farthing prize :
Meanwhile the merchant, in this wholesale pelf,
Has gull'd the saplings, and enrich'd himself.

From head to foot bedeck'd in smart attire,
The servant-girl has come to spend her hire ;
The rainbow glistens round her full-moon face,
And pride and folly regulate her pace :
Away she hastens to the village ball,
To laugh at virtue, and herself enthrall.
No wit less eager, following in her train,
Fresh from the plough-tail speeds the lusty swain :
His simple toilet hastily perform'd,
He deems himself becomingly adorn'd,

With knots of roses tuck'd into his vest,
To charm the maidens and outdo the rest.
Anon the sport begins—the band, the dance,
Both after models not direct from France ;
The scraping fiddle and the screaming fife,
Away they jig as if they jugg'd for life ;
At intervals regaled with tap-room fare,
They thus consume the night, and lay their pockets
bare.

Some seek the bowling-green, th' athletic limb
There finds employment till the eyes grow dim,
And moral sense falls prostrate on the ground,
Thro' oft-repeated draughts from glasses round.
Now mind, with opiates steep'd, profoundly sleeps ;
Conscience disarm'd no longer vigil keeps ;
Without a rival to contest the day,
Triumphant sense holds undisputed sway :
Touch'd by the magic of her sceptral wand,
All virtuous motions instantly abscond ;
And all restraints to vicious actions flee,
Beneath the influence of her fulsome glee.
And now inflamed, all hearts are fully rife
To pass the wassail hours in noise and strife ;
All are prepared in manly feats to join,
To play at cards, fight, wrestle, or purloin.

The stunning clangour of show bands without ;
Oaths, jests, and ribaldry, and drunken shout ;
Streets thickly crowded, taverns densely throng'd,
Compose the scene, for many a night prolong'd.

The gentle moralist, or gentler muse,
These festive scenes with kind connivance views :
“ The rust contracted by a year's hard toil,
Too oft ill paid, alas ! upon the soil,
Or, flail in hand, thump, thump from day to day,
These yearly merry-makings wipe away.”
And yet the fruit of this prolific soil
Defeats the ends of philanthropic toil ;
Retards the growth of happiness below,
And scatters wide the pregnant seeds of woe :
For mark the sequel ! mirth too has its date,
Tho' for a while it keeps the heart elate ;
The spirits strain'd above their wonted tone,
Avenge the wrong, and sink below the zone.
The feast, now o'er, has left a blank behind,
A void as cheerless as 'tis undefined :
All things without seem as they were before,
Save here and there a saunt'rer at the door ;
To whom protracted leisure yields a boon,
To stretch his limbs, and guzzle beer till noon.
The crowd's dispers'd, each to his usual share
Of daily labour and of daily care ;

And daily pleasures too for such *were* found,
As days and weeks revolv'd their usual round.
Alas ! 'tis otherwise ! altho' in name,
And points essential, all things are the same ;
The festive hours have left behind a ban,
And dissipation has transform'd the man.
His task, at all times hard, is drudg'ry now,
And discontentment scowls upon his brow ;
Life's ills are view'd with microscopic eyes ;
Its faults assume a flattering disguise ;
The bird of promise from the bush has flown,
And mole-hill troubles are to mountains grown.
Adieu, domestic concord ! jar and strife
Now swell and fret the common ills of life :
His means throughout the year can scarce do more
Than bar out grisly hunger from his floor ;
Yet this small pittance he had weekly tax'd •
To form a purse, whose strings were not relax'd,
Tho' by the claims of num'rous wants oppress'd,
Until the hour that call'd him to the "feast" ;
Then what was due to nature in distress,
Allur'd the silly poltroon to excess,
Which both consum'd his fund, and form'd a score,
To clip his earnings for some six months more.
Thus whilst his means are cumber'd with a debt,
Increasing wants his daily path beset :

Now he begins to feel distaste for home,
(But taverns like not who unfurnish'd come) ;
Without the means to gratify his thirst
For ale-house joys, he feels like one accurs'd ;
His heart is there, but there he cannot be,
At home his heart is not, yet there is he,
A sullen mood sits brooding on his soul,
And all his passions yield to its control.

° The mischief ends not here : in various ways
The "feast" its evil influence displays,
Thro' all the grades of life, at ev'ry stage,
From thoughtless boyhood down to tott'ring age.
Its fetid scenes repeated once a year,
Throw over all a false and dazzling glare ;
Beneath this halo youth and age conceive
A gust for pleasures which the mind deceive,
And in exchange for one excessive dose,
Dispense with sober, cheerful, calm repose.

The youthful swain has lost his peace of mind,
And at the tap-room left his heart behind :
Familiar scenes are irksome to his sight,
Accustom'd sounds afford him no delight ;
The usual modicum of daily toil,
Perform'd with ease, and finish'd with a smile,
Occasions now disgust throughout the day ;
The sluggish hours roll tardily away ;

And when at last, impatient to begone,
He quits the scene of hated labour done,
Homeward he hastens with a hurried pace,
As when the aspirant fears to lose the race ;
But not at home, as formerly, to find
Rest for his limbs and solace for his mind :
Dry and insipid now are former joys,
And rural pleasures changed to childish toys ;
The fav'rite book, the heav'n-illumined page,
Essays in penmanship and converse sage,
The fireside tales which age delights to tell,
And uncorrupted youth to hear as well ;
All are become distasteful to his mind,
And all at once for tap-room joys resign'd.

Within the precincts of this well stored-school
Of ev'ry vice, behold, the heedless fool
Learns with prodigious ease to steel his heart,
And bids full soon all serious thoughts depart.
His mind, by nature strongly prone to ill,
Holds to the side of vice with stubborn will,
Much as the pregnant loadstone's native force
Attracts the trembling needle in its course ;
With strong cohesive properties imbued,
The one attracts, the other is subdued.

The usual round, in each specific case,
Of man's degen'rate and apostate race

Yields ample culture for the growth of sin,
Whose pois'nous roots strike deep and spread within.
'Twere well for man, to his own int'rest blind,
If all external influences combined
To check the progress of the sinful leav'n,
And urge his entrance on the road to heav'n.
Alas! 'tis otherwise—at ev'ry turn
Temptation meets him; he, unused to spurn
Th' alluring bait, becomes an easy prey,
And vice beguiles, and leads him far astray.

Wisdom invites him to her gracious arms
With gentle voice and strong attractive charms:
He heeds her not; but, blinded by the spell,
Spurns her, and hastens in the road to hell!
Tremendous choice! yet with what eager zeal
The crowd prefer it to eternal weal!
To things of earth their spirits still inclined,
They leave superior joys outstripp'd behind.
Portentous folly! yet they deem him lost
To sense of bliss who stops to count the cost:
Who, warn'd by wisdom, takes a diff'rent rule,
With proud contempt they designate a fool.
Men, in the wilful blindness of the heart,
Prefer the evil to the better part,
And laugh to scorn whom God has taught to scan
The nobler aim and interests of man.

Amazing paradox ! Yet who would fear
To lose a purchase at a price so dear ?
Who would not rather be esteem'd a fool,
Than gain th' applause of earth, and lose his soul ?

THE CLOCK.

So vanish earthly things ! Far in the west
 The sun sinks down to his accustom'd rest,
 The last faint ling'ring ray forsakes the skies ;
 So man departs the stage of life, and dies.
 That clock, which just has struck the hour of day,
 Tells how on hasty wing Time flies away ;
 And might, were man more anxious to be taught,
 Suggest to him full many a useful thought !

The flight of hours and days and months and years,
 Marks the transition of our hopes and fears ;
 Each pleasure has its date, nor can a pain
 Beyond th' appointed limit aught remain :
 As thro' the chequer'd maze of life we rove,
 And tread the rugged hill or pleasant grove,
 The hour that lingers, that too swiftly flown
 Have like dimensions, when maturely grown,
 The hour of pain and that of pleasing dreams,
 Howe'er unlike to each the other seems,
 Turn on the pivot, this and that alike,
 Till that time-meter is prepared to strike ;
 Till then no hand can force the one away,
 Nor, that point gain'd, prolong the other's stay.

Oh, what a world of changes crowd the space
Mark'd by the circuit round that ample face :
Since last those indicators reach'd the goal,
(Soon their arrival bell again will toll).
Thousands of spirits have the margin crost
Of that abyss whence none return, some lost
To hope of heaven's remotest, feeblest ray,
And some have reach'd the shores of endless day !
Who can compute the changes Time has wrought ?
The task exceeds the pow'r of finite thought !
Yet in the journey of those hands we see,
Tho' not their sum, yet their epitome.

Time past and future, how unlike they seem,
Yet each appears much like a summer's dream :
The one has proved a meteor's transient glare,
The other as a phantom in the air
Expands and lengthens till it comes, is gone,
And leaves us all bewilder'd and alone.
Deceiv'd by some illusion of the mind,
Ourselves miscalculators still we find ;
Tho' proud and boastful of our reason's pow'r,
Yet we mistake the phases of an hour.
How short the period of our mortal life !
Too much, alas ! the scene of care and strife ;
And yet how large a portion is misspent
In doing that which riper years repent.

The youthful fancy, ardent, fresh, and keen,
Clothes with hyperbole the future scene ;
And in the dazzle which itself has made
The mind pursues, until it is betray'd ;
The giddy phantom, far too bright and fair,
Resists the touch, and vanishes in air.
But eager still, we still maintain the race,
And hurry forward in the fruitless chase :
Thro' many a maze the phantasm has fled,
Thro' many a labyrinth the pursuit is led :
The aerial vision still new forms assumes,
And still deceives, but not the thirst consumes :
Onward, and onward still it speeds its flight,
And we still follow with renew'd delight,
Until experience far too dearly bought,
And hope deferr'd suggest the dubious thought,
That the fair promise only was design'd
To cheat and mock and dissipate the mind.

How false in youth our estimate of time !
How changed our views in settled manhood's prime !
How diff'rent still the thoughts our minds engage,
When we attain the soberness of age.
Could we when young our future selves forestal,
Or when grown old our youthful days recal,
Far other objects would our minds rejoice,
Far different motives would direct our choice.

Oh, who can estimate the worth of time ?
The smallest part outweighs the richest mine
In his esteem, who, on the point to die,
Feels his unfitness to ascend on high :
How would he part with worlds, if in his pow'r
To gain the respite of a single hour !
But time must pass ! 'tis its inherent law,
None can a moment on its progress draw :
As the fleet shadow flits along the plain
It hastens on its destined goal to gain ;
Then like a mighty cataract, at the fall
Draws in its current and ingulphs us all.

Soon will the "mighty Angel's" trump proclaim
Its race completed in Jehovah's name ;—
Ten thousand thunders in one peal combined
Were but the distant rustling of the wind
Compared with that dread sound—shall wake the dead,
And call the slumb'ring nations from their bed :
Th' unwonted blast shall reach the distant poles,
And traverse wheresoever ocean rolls ;
From earth reverberate to those worlds afar,
Till it has summon'd the most distant star :
The trembling earth, disjunct at each pole,
Shall cease her long accustom'd course to roll ;
The stars shall quit their orbs and flee away ;
The sun resign the empire of the day ;

The stricken moon, amazed with sudden fear,
Reel to and fro, and stagger from her sphere ;
The stretch'd-out heav'ns, no longer needed, flee,
And time be swallow'd in eternity !

SONNET.

BOAST not, presumptuous youth, of present health,
As if its bloom could never know decay :
The fairest flower that decks the brow of May
Soon fades—perchance an emblem of thyself.
Shouldst thou, the dupe of folly, now defer
What health and vigour only can perform,
Madly presuming that no adverse storm
Will e'er molest thee, or thy course deter ;
How wilt thou bear the agonizing thought,
Should sickness come and find thee in arrear,
That, peradventure, now thy wild career
By death's impartial hand will be cut short ?
And should death wage with thee the fatal war,
How wilt thou stand before thy Maker's bar ?

ISAIAH'S HARP.

I.

ON Siloa's banks of old,
 Holy men of God foretold
 Future weal, or future woe,
 Deeds of shame and glory too ;
 Deeds which should the doers crown
 With the meed of just renown ;
 Deeds which should their actors brand
 With the curse of ev'ry land.
 Glowing with celestial fire,
 There Isaiah swept his lyre :
 At his feet the murmuring stream
 Symphonied the sacred theme ;
 And the chorus of the skies
 Caught the strain, and bid it rise
 O'er all heaven's unbounded plain,
 As he sang Messiah's reign.

II.

On the rapid tide of time,
 Distant, yet distinct, sublime,
 See the grand perspective rise,
 Joy of earth and of the skies !

“Unto us is born a Child,”
Heav’n and earth are reconciled ;
“Unto us a Son is given,”
Peace on earth, and joy in heav’n !
In mysterious harmony
God and man at once is He :
Hence the twofold glorious name,
Kindling the prophetic flame :
Tell it to the nations, tell !
Lo, He comes, Immanuel !

III.

Son of David, mighty God,
Earth shall own his sceptral rod ;
Father of the future age,
His wisdom shall all minds engage,
And sages at his feet shall own
Justice and truth support his Throne.
Kings shall pay Him homage meet,
Bow the knee and kiss his feet ;
Truth shall flourish in his day,
Fraud and error flee away,
As shadows flit along the vale,
Or chaff before the sweeping gale.
By the radiance of His eye,
Envy, struck, shall fade and die ;

Grov'ling ignorance shall flee,
The deaf shall hear, the blind shall see ;
And knowledge, nurtur'd by his hand,
Shall grow and spread thro' ev'ry land ;
Its fruit, divinely sweet and fair,
All tribes alike shall freely share.

IV.

As when stern winter's icy folds,
With fetid damps and piercing colds,
Before the genial warmth of spring
Subdued, depart on hasty wing ;
The grisly monster Vice shall flee,
With her long train of misery ;
And moral health to man restor'd
Shall universal joy afford ;
And God, well pleased, descend again,
And dwell upon the earth with men.

V.

Struck by the vengeance of his frown,
Lo ! Tyranny falls headlong down ;
And hurl'd by his Almighty power,
It sinks in death to rise no more.
The captive, bruised with iron rod,
Springs from the dust, and owns his God ;

The sons of want behold a feast,
And each concludes himself a guest ;
Nor knows he aught of secret pain,
Lest he should suffer want again,
For ample stores of wealth from heaven
To all the tribes of earth are given.

VI.

Hostile forces now no more
Steep their hands in human gore ;
War's bloated demon, fierce and fell,
Is headlong hurl'd to rage in hell ;
And kings, deliver'd from his charm,
Their disbanded troops disarm.
With joy the vet'ran hears the word,
And promptly yields his glitt'ring sword.
The sable Indian tribes draw near
With poisoned lance and barbed spear ;
No more as instruments of woe
To face and fight th' advancing foe :
The reign of wrath and strife is o'er,
The nations study war no more,
To pruning-hooks they bend their spears,
And beat their burnish'd swords to shares.

VII.

Beneath his mild and just command,
All tribes on equal footing stand ;
The peasant with the prince unites
On equal terms, with equal rights ;
Their joyful hearts now chasten'd blend,
Each owns a brother and a friend.
Peace as a copious river flows ;
Love with seraph's ardour glows :
Like the dew, which none can count,
Glist'ning upon Hermon's mount,
Radiant in the smile of heaven,
Blessings to mankind are given ;
Exil'd grief has pass'd the bourn,
Never shall it more return ;—
Hark ! the mingling extacy,
'Tis the shout of Jubilee !

VIII.

Ah ! what means that boding strain ?
Let me touch thy chords again :
Deeper and more sullen grow
Unexampled notes of woe ;—
Wherefore, O prophetic lyre,
Wherefore giv'st thou notes so dire ?

Intercepted is that scene
Radiant with heaven's brightest sheen ;
Intercepted by a cloud,
Darker than earth's midnight shroud :
From the earth that cloud arose,
Deeper, darker, lo, it grows !
Now it stretches o'er the plain,
Now it reaches to the main,
Now it rears its form on high,
Now it rises to the sky ;
Yet the bow of promise there,
Whispers hope, forbids despair ;—
Lyre of sacred minstrelsy,
Solve this awful mystery !

IX.

Now in numbers deep and slow,
Such as utter strains of woe ;
Now in sudden starts of grief,
As when suffering claims relief ;
Now in angry bursts of wrath,
As when crime calls vengeance forth ;
Now in swelling notes sublime,
As when patience combats crime ;
Or as when, with steady pace,
Innocence sustains disgrace ;

Or goodness with unruffled mien
Endures despite and scorn and pain ;
And in the agonies of death
Employs its latest, faintest breath,
To intercede with frowning heaven,
That its own murd'ers be forgiven.

X.

Such the strains of recent birth
The prophetic harp gave forth :
And now the prophet's awful chart
Unfolds the dark mysterious part,
And distant scenes of horror rise
Distinct before his wond'ring eyes.
Messiah comes ! the promised Seed
Comes in his people's time of need ;
With mighty hand He comes to save
From sin and sorrow and the grave.
The world created by his power,
Rejects Him in his coming hour :
" His own " behold with scornful eyes,
And all his proffer'd grace despise,
And Jews with Gentile nations join
To crush his mild and gracious reign.
Blinded by the power of hell,
Madden'd by satanic spell,

With one consent, in bold array,
They spurn his yoke and curse his day.
Deeds of scorn and words of jeer
Beset his path, assail his ear ;
Rage and malice do their part
To mar his form and rend his heart,
Thro' all his life, tho' low and brief,
His lot is suff'ring—his companion grief :
And last of all he yields his breath,
Rank'd with the wicked in his death,
And in the rich man's grave obtains
The rest which there the weary gains.

XI.

But men esteem'd Him spurn'd of God,
And struck by His avenging rod ;
To all a dire example given
Not to usurp the rights of heaven ;
Yet He was wounded for our sins,
And from his death our safety springs :
Unnumber'd stripes to Him were given,
That He might make our peace with heaven.
Not for his own, but for our guilt
His blood in sacrifice was spilt,
The bruising hand of wrath was laid
For us on his devoted head.

From virtue and from God estranged,
In paths of sin we widely ranged :
He saw our doom, and freely gave
Himself, our souls from wrath to save.
Constrain'd by love He took our cause,
And pledged his Father's injured laws,
The claims of justice to suffice
By his own death, an ample price ;
The pledge accepted, He appears
In sweat and blood, in groans and tears,
Its utmost limit to discharge,
And set a ransom'd world at large :
Exaction made, His zeal sustains ;
His firm resolve unmoved remains ;
And like a lamb to slaughter led,
He bears "the curse," and bows his head.

XII.

From his atoning death proceeds
A virtue which all worth exceeds ;
Jehovah owns the ransom paid,
And swears to raise the victor's head :
Since He hath put his soul to grief,
It is decreed he shall be chief,
And from his sacrifice shall spring
A numerous race to own him king ;

His name thro' distant regions spread,
Shall with new life inspire the dead :
Nations long enslaved shall rise,
Fix on Him their wondering eyes,
And by the knowledge of his name
Feel cancell'd all their guilt and shame,
His days prolong'd thro' distant years,
Whilst time its destin'd race careers,
The pleasure of the Lord shall stand,
And prosper in his mighty band :
To compensate his dire distress,
His soul's deep anguish to redress,
The many shall his portion be,
And men of might shall to his standard flee.

THE SAVIOUR.

THE sun had travell'd to the west,
 The busy world had sunk to rest,
 And faint and shadowy light was giv'n
 As stars illumed the face of heav'n :
 The night was calm and all was still ;—
 Save the faint ripple of the rill,
 Whose waters slaked the fleecy herd,
 No other sound was to be heard :
 The very breezes sweetly slept
 Where Bethlehem shepherds vigil kept ;—
 But sudden as the lightning's stroke,
 An unknown voice the silence broke,
 And in unearthly accent spoke :
 A halo of unwonted sheen
 Surrounds the visitant unseen ;
 And now in the opaque of night
 The glory shone divinely bright.
 What mortal ears that voice could hear,
 And not be terrified with fear ?
 What mortal eyes could see that sight,
 And not be dimm'd with sore affright ?

As when the dread of instant death
Almost suspends the panting breath,
And cold amazement chills the blood,
And freezes all the vital flood ;
The shepherds seized with wild dismay,
Shrink from the scene and melt away.
Such is transgression's awful ban !
It loads with guilt the soul of man,
Unfits him to converse with heav'n :
Without divine assistance giv'n,
No child of earth, however bold,
Could undismay'd communion hold
With spirits from that blest abode,
Where dwells the Majesty of God.

Now prostrate on the ground, they hear
These terms of peace and words of cheer—
“ Fear not, ye favour'd of the Lord,
Rise undismay'd, and hear His word :
I come with joyful news to earth,
Come to proclaim the Saviour's birth ;
Go forth and prove th' announcement true,
And this shall be a sign to you :
In David's city, lowly born
On this auspicious, happy morn,
A helpless babe in manger laid,
Behold the Son of God display'd !”

Lo ! countless multitudes attest
The message true, and mortals blest :
Then, in full chorus, as they rise,
They sing amidst the ambient skies—
“Glory to God most high be giv’n,
And henceforth peace ’tween earth and heav’n.”
As one recovering from a swoon,
Deems life an unexpected boon ;
The warm blood flutters in the heart,
And hideous forms of fear depart :
The shepherds re-assur’d arise,
And join the anthem of the skies ;
Forthwith to Bethlehem they haste,
The long-predicted joy to taste ;
There they behold with joyful eyes,
The Christ of God, in lowly guise.
No earthly pomp attends His birth,
No festive scenes, no shout of mirth,
No courtly vassals bending low
Conspire their loyalty to show.
Had all the treasures men possess,
In wealth, in equipage, and dress,
Had all the forms which men devise
To move the heart and charm the eyes,
Conspired to celebrate his birth
Thro’ all the kingdoms of the earth,

It had been naught—compared with Him,
The solar beams are faint and dim ;
Those countless orbs that glow on high,
The brightest gem that studs the sky,
From Him a borrow'd lustre wears,
His peerless rays reflected bears:
To men unseen, around him shed
Immortal glory crowns his head.

Whilst the nobles of the earth
O'erlook the myst'ries of his birth,
And e'en "his own," with blinded eyes,
His humble origin despise ;
Eastern magi from afar,
Guided by a mystic star,
Come to pay him homage meet,
Come to worship at his feet.
The rumour spreads, and Herod hears,
And for his waning glory fears ;
With jaundiced eye and jealous pang,
Doubting whence these tidings sprang,
And to what issue they should tend,
At once he feigns himself a friend,
And strives by treach'rous art to crush
The tow'ring oak or feeble rush :
The project fails, and Herod dies,
Whilst He, the heir of earth and skies,

By heav'n protected from his foes,
In stature and in wisdom grows.
At length to prime of manhood grown,
He hastes to make his mission known ;
But first in Jordan's ample tide
Descends to be in form baptized ;
Then on the margin of the flood,
He stands reveal'd the Son of God :
Dove-like the Spirit from above
Descends his mission to approve ;
And lo ! a voice from heav'n proclaims
His sov'reign titles and his claims—
"This is my well-beloved Son,
His doctrine hear, his sceptre own."—
Throughout the dark domain of hell,
A deep and sullen murmuring yell
Responds to the Divine behest :
Satan, with proud and haughty crest,
Resolves the sentence to disprove,
And thwart the purpose of eternal love.

Prompted by the inward fire,
With firm resolve and strong desire,
Messiah hastes to meet the foe,
To dash his wiles, and lay him low.
Not as when heretofore he sped,
And the first pair were captive led

In Eden, changed to scenes of woe,
Shall he prevail and conquer now.
Though all his arts are duly tried,
And wile on wile successive plied,
More than his match the tempter meets,
And thwarted and abash'd retreats.
Thus having foil'd hell's subtle chief,
By truthful parley, pointed, brief,
From stage to stage he next proceeds
In open fight, aggressive deeds:
Before his glance successive rise
The courses of his grand emprise;
His eye surveys both high and low,
The dispositions of the foe:
In purpose firm, in courage great,
At once he storms th' imperial seat,
And from the tempter of mankind
Wins back to God the human mind.
With gentle tone, and look benign,
First He makes known His great design,
And in Capernaum's favour'd land
Proclaims the reign of God at hand:
With fervid eloquence and loud,
He bids repent th' astonish'd crowd,
And sheds the beams of heav'nly light
Thro' these dark realms of moral night.

Lo! men from shades of death arise,
With rapture beaming in their eyes ;
And, late the slaves of sin and hell,
Transform'd and free, his triumphs swell :
So the bright monarch of the day
Thro' night's dank vapours speeds his way ;
Each drooping flow'ret owns the boon,
And springs to meet the vernal noon ;
And Nature, freed from sterile chains,
Adorns with fruits the smiling plains.

Beneath His influence benign,
Fast fade the fruits of Satan's reign :
Hell's legions fall before His might,
As darkness chased by morning light.

Amidst the crowd behold Him move,
His wisdom, pow'r, and love to prove ;
He heals the sick, the captive frees,
And gives the weary spirit ease.
Drawn by the wonders of His name,
(For ev'rywhere hath spread His fame,)
In squalid groups th' infirm appear,
From towns and cities far and near :
The halt, the maim'd, the deaf, the blind,
Hope at his hands relief to find.
From various points see them approach,
To prove the virtue of his touch :

He kindly listens to their cry,
Regards their woes with pitying eye ;
Approves their faith, His blessing gives,
And, lo ! each dying suppliant lives.
Quick as the turning of the tide,
Behold the multitude divide !
A panic spreads among them now,
Pale terror sits on ev'ry brow :
For, lash'd to more than mortal speed,
His flight outvieing fleetest steed,
Or as the scouring whirlwind booms,
The fierce demoniac of the tombs,
With fiendish yellings, loud and long,
Makes for the centre of the throng.
The conscious demons at a glance,
Descry their victor in advance ;
Shrink from the contact of his ire,
And deprecate his vengeance dire ;
By His transpiercing glance o'eraw'd,
They own Him Christ, the Son of God.
Not as of late their baffled chief,
They crouching seek a respite brief !
Lest he in wrath, their hour arrived,
On earth of resting-place deprived,
Should them in Tartarus confine,
Crave lodgement in a herd of swine.

He grants their suit—yet 'tis no boon,
The time of vengeance comes full soon ;
And ev'ry fleeting hour fills up
The righteous measure of their cup.
Meanwhile, transform'd in heart and mind,
Low at the Saviour's feet reclined,
The late possess'd with calm delight
Adores his benefactor's might ;
And charm'd his goodness to record,
Owns Him his Saviour and his Lord.
Stung with defeat, the madden'd foe
Resolv'd no effort to forego ;
Tho' oft repulsed, yet fill'd with hate,
Strives new expedients to create,
In meagre hope, or sheer despair,
His ruin'd fortunes to repair.
As when the fierce volcano's rage
Threatens to mar fair nature's page,
And, long by counter force withstood,
Pours o'er the plain a burning flood ;
His malice bursting all restraint,
The tempter doffs his bootless feint ;
And mad with rage, come woe or weal,
Resolves, tho' this his doom should seal,
One bold attempt revenge t' obtain,
And his lost empire to regain.

Glancing his crest-fall'n forces o'er,
With voice more loud than thunder's roar,
He calls to council brief his peers,
And each his prostrate form uprears :
Swift as the forked lightnings glare,
From east to west, illumes the air,
(Such pow'r, tho' fall'n, they still retain,)
Embattl'd hosts his presence gain ;
He, unsubdued in pride or hate,
Proceeds his late formed scheme to state,
And now such sounds as spirits hear,
In loud applause, fill all the air.
In purpose firm, for action bold,
At once they hasten to unfold
The deep-laid train of darksome deeds,
Which ends not till Messiah bleeds,
For so, hell's chieftain had resolv'd ;
Unconscious that his plot involv'd
Heavn's firm, inscrutable decree,
To end his reign—the world set free.
'Tis done ! the Prince of Glory dies,
And lo ! as lightning from the skies,
Satan subdued beneath his power,
Sinks down to rage, but reign no more !

LIFE. A SIMILE.

FROM a crevice in a rock,
Where the shepherd feeds his flock,
Springs a little gurgling rill,
Gaily rolls it down the hill :
Hinder'd by no hostile force,
Onward still it winds its course.
As it wanders down the dell,
Kindred rills its volume swell :
Smooth as the transparent glass,
Clear as light its waters pass
Onward towards the distant main ;—
Now it intersects the plain,
Now it curves fantastic—then
Serpent-like it threads the glen ;
Slowly winds it thro' the vale,
Softly murmuring to the gale :
Now it tempts the ravine deep,
Where grim Solitude doth keep,
Where no voice is ever heard,
Save the screech of night's own bird :
Bitter moans upon the air,
Speak of fierce contention there ;

Deeper, louder murmurs tell
Of num'rous deeds of conflict fell.
Jutting rocks its course impede,
Clouds of foam avenge the deed:
Fiercer grows the wrathful strife,
As when two warriors fight for life;
Doubtful, and more doubtful still,
Grows the issue, as, with skill
And prowess equal, each contends
For the life which each defends.
Onward bounds the indignant flood,
Oft its progress is withstood;
Dashing the huge piles among,
Furiously it roars along.
Partial victory is gain'd—
Now a passage is obtain'd;
Forth it issues through the pass,
Like a glittering sheet of glass:
Now an interval of rest,
Smooth its surface, calm its breast;
Softer murmurs, as it flows,
Mark the casual repose.
Hark, the distant thunders roar!
Louder, deeper than before;
Each successive clap proclaims
Raging storms, approaching rains.

Scarcely had it known repose,
When new grievances arose :
Mountain torrents, all around,
Sought its stream with furious bound.
Now its troubled waters rise
Swollen with anger and surprise ;
Now indignantly it spurns
High embankments, sudden turns :
Forth its roaring torrents flow,
Deluging the plains below.
Anon it gathers up its strength,
And regains its course at length ;
But the feebleness of age
Checks its progress, stills its rage :
Wider, shallower it grows,
Fainter still and fainter flows ;
Pebbles now obstruct its course,
And withstand its broken force ;
And the banks its waters lave,
Laugh to scorn its rippling wave.
Again it concentrates its power,
As if to meet the fatal hour :
Narrower, deeper now it grows,
Then into the ocean flows.

Such is life. No cares obtrude
To mar its innocent prelude ;

Clear its sky, its prospect bright,
Every object yields delight :
In the morning of its day,
With an undisputed sway,
Seated on its dazzling throne,
Mirthful gladness rules alone.
Soon, alas ! the scene is changed,
Soon the current is estranged :
Devious now it slowly moves,
Now perverse and wayward proves ;
Anon it swells and foams with rage,
Troubles soon its wrath assuage :
Rash imprudence, swelling pride
Plant huge rocks on either side ;
These, a strong array of foes,
Gall its wounds and mock its throes :
Vice allures its wanton eyes,
Storms of guilty passions rise,
Toil and strife and hidden snares
Dash it with vexatious cares :
Eager lust and sensual joy
Exhaust its stores, its powers destroy :
Or avarice marks a different route,
And spurs it in the sharp pursuit,
Where nought is gain'd but cank'ring rust,
Tho' follow'd with increasing gust ;

Till cheated, prostrate in disgrace,
It ends in death the fruitless chase :
Or like a scorching meteor nigh,
Ambition doth pollute its sky,
And as with pestilential breath,
Lays deep the nucleus of death.
The cheated votary of fame
Barters all things for a name ;
Madly he deems that earth's renown
Is happiness, both sum and crown ;
Strains to the task his utmost might
To gain the unenviable height ;
And in the race leaves far behind
All interests worthy of the mind :
The charm which doth his life devour,
Commands him with despotic power ;
The passion ceases not to grow,
Till it has laid its victim low.

Thus, for the most part, life proceeds,
Alien to nobler joys and deeds,
Till, spent with care and fruitless toil,
Bitter fretting and turmoil,
Still struggling to retain its hold,
Or madly striving to enfold
Some phantom gliding o'er the lea,
It sinks into eternity.—

Is man to such a pass foredoom'd ?
Nay, such whose life is thus consumed
Bear on their brow this sentence shown,
The choice and blame are both their own.
Wisdom proclaims, thrice happy they
Who live to God from day to day ;
In peace they live—and when they die,
Ascend to dwell with Him on high.

SONNETS.

I.

THE Son of Man nail'd to th' accursed tree,
'Tween earth and heav'n uplifted bows his head ;
Assail'd with jeers and scorn and infamy,
Despised and counted with the impious dead.
Yet in Him there a glorious myst'ry lies,
Wrapp'd in the awful gloom that shrouds the day ;
This shall, anon, attract all hearts and eyes,
And Him supremely glorious display.
He dies for sin, yet He no crime had done ;
He dies in shame, tho' He is free from guilt ;
He dies to save a world by sin undone,
A sacrifice for man his blood is spilt.
The wond'ring nations shall his virtue own,
And clothe his name with honour and renown.

II.

Lo! on the cross display'd the Saviour hangs,
With wonder view'd by faith's adoring eye :
Charm'd by the sight the soul forgets its pangs,
And guilt-stung conscience lays its vengeance by.
Soft words of peace still issue from the spot,
And heav'n, else clad in wrath, smiles sweetly there ;
Within that sphere its aspect changes not,
But aye, remains serene, unclouded, clear :
A sacred halo brightens all the scene,
Beneath whose beams the dying sinner lives ;
There is a clime all pure and serene,
Whose healing pow'r new life and vigour gives ;
There, all who enter are transform'd and blest,
And weary souls obtain a heav'nly rest.

III.

“ When He bringeth again his first-begotten into the world, He saith,
And let all the angels of God worship Him.”

ABOVE the heav'ns enthron'd in peerless light,
He reigns who erst on Calv'ry bled and died ;
And thrones and pow'rs and princeds own his right
Over all worlds unrivall'd to preside.
From every mansion in the House of God,
Thro' the vast regions of unbounded space,
Lo! mingling myriads seek his high abode,
To hail the triumphs of his matchless grace :

Low at his feet each casts his dazzling crown,
Unnumber'd hosts before Him prostrate fall,
Then rising celebrate his just renown,
And vie to crown him President of all.
Henceforth He holds a universal sway,
Henceforth, as meet, all worlds his rule obey.

IV.

THE MOON.

THAT beauteous orb, whose radiance cheers the night,
And clothes with gems the surface of the deep,
Thus faithfully reflects her borrow'd light,
Whilst men lie folded in the arms of sleep.
'Tis thus the word of God reflects on earth,
Amidst the darkness of its moral gloom,
The light of truth which owns a heav'nly birth,
And wide displays a world beyond the tomb :
To that it points whilst men are grov'ling here,
And bids them seek a lasting portion there :
Some heed the mandate, and obey with fear,
And some despise, and perish in despair.
Be mine the path of wisdom to pursue,
And while on earth, keep heav'n in constant view.

V.

FAR in the wilderness a devious road
Conducts the weary trav'ler to his home :
Thro' many a dang'rous maze his feet have trod,
And many dangers more are yet to come.
The thought of home beguiles the tedious hours,
And softens the remembrance of the past ;
Whilst Hope her balm into his bosom pours,
The blissful hope to reach his home at last.
Hope is his morning-star, she gives him light,
And thro' the gloom her cheering radiance sheds ;
Faith is his guide—she leads his footsteps right,
Beneath her conduct he securely treads.
So speeds the Christian thro' life's dang'rous road,
To reach the mansion of his Father God.

VI.

RUDELY blows the bleak north wind,
Too just an emblem of life's frequent ills ;
Dark clouds and adverse storms assail the mind,
And oft-perplexing care its ardour chills.
Sometimes the fitful blast doth nip the bud,
Or crush the bloom of its most cherish'd joys ;
Anon the most desired of earthly good,
When gain'd, as if in scorn the spirit cloy.

Who then would wish for life and length of days,
Since life and length of days are fraught with pain ?
Wisdom divine a nobler end displays,
And points us where unsullied pleasures reign :
Thrice happy they who keep that end in view,
And with increasing zeal the glorious prize pursue.

VII.

TYRANTS may chain men's bodies, and suppress
The verbal utterance of human thought :
Men may as brutes be barter'd, sold, and bought
By fiends in mortal shape and human dress ;
The mitred tyrant may heaven's laws transgress,
Without a blush man's inborn rights invade,
And with whitewash'd hypocrisy evade
The gen'ral censure of unjust excess—
But not the soul, intact to finite power,
Shall any from her dignity divorce,
And bind her down, enslaved by outward force :
Above the reach of bonds and swords she'll soar,
For ever must she live unfetter'd, free,
As sweeps the gale across the unbounded sea.

VIII.

TO MY CHILD ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

ANOTHER year of thy brief life is past,
My innocent, my laughing, blithsome child !
That sun which on thy birth-day sweetly smiled,
Bids thee not fear adversity's chill blast :
Be cautious yet, for storms may soon arise,
And cloud his smiling aspect with a frown,
And raging tempests rapidly come down,
And wild confusion desolate the skies :
Thy sire has felt—O may'st thou never feel—
That youthful rashness gathers perils round,
And may inflict a deep and rankling wound,
Which heaven alone has competence to heal :
Taught by experience he 'd admonish thee ;
Be cautious then, my blithsome one, and happy be !

STANZAS.

I LOVE to watch the rising sun
Begin his ardent race ;
And when at eve his course is run,
His latest ray to trace.

When first his glowing colours paint
The margin of the sky,
Or when his ling'ring beams grow faint,
And from the ocean die ;

No art can e'er the scene transcribe,
'Tis Nature's grandeur all ;
No language can the scene describe,
Nor fancy's power recall.

I love to gaze upon the moon,
Adorn'd with milder grace ;
And deem her setting hour too soon
To hide so sweet a face.

When thro' the sky she rides serene,
Or darts from cloud to cloud ;
Now in her full-orb'd glory seen,
Now wrapt in midnight shroud :

Or when her bright translucent rays
Are sparkling on the deep,
Or down the avenue of bays,
Or up the woodland steep.

I love to watch the distant star
Illume the vault of heaven ;
To view the planet from afar,
Or count the mystic seven.

Sun, moon, and stars, thro' all their spheres,
In one continued glow,
Where'er the eye of man careers,
Their Maker's glory show.

I love the earliest flower of spring,
When first it comes in sight ;
I love to hear Philomel sing,
And cheer the livelong night.

I love the three-fold beauteous May,
The queen of months, whose flowers
Perfume the air of ev'ry day,
And cheer its dullest hours.

I love whom many others deem
A tyrant fierce and fell ;
Stern Winter clad in frost and snow,
I love him, ay, full well !

The driven snow, the howling blast,
The dreary winter's night,
Not less than summer's beauties past,
Inspire me with delight.

The woodland stream, the purling rill, .
The mountain-torrent's rage,
The dappled plain, the lofty hill,
The secret hermitage ;

The heath-clad waste, the pleasant grove,
Alike have charms for me :
I love o'er hills and dales to rove,
Or track the boundless sea.

I love the calm domestic scene,
Where peace and concord dwell ;
Where ev'ry countenance serene
Bespeaks the heart is well.

I love a friend whose heart repeats
The throbbings of my own ;
Who mildly chides, and frankly greets,
But never will disown.

I love a book, whose lucid page
Reveals the pregnant thought,
And passes down from age to age
The wonders mind has wrought.

And there are many books I love,
But one above the rest ;
The sacred page my heart esteems
The sweetest and the best.

All these, and more, my thoughts approve
As blessings God has given :
That noted last commands most love,
It shows the path to heaven.

DEATH.

RELENTLESS Tyrant ! whose unyielding brow
Regards nor prayers, nor sighs, nor groans, nor tears ;
Whose ruthless hand with equal stroke lays low
The bloom of youth and ripen'd fruit of years.

Thy despotic sway extends o'er ev'ry land,
And stoutest hearts shrink from thy dreaded blow :
Assail'd by thee, embattled troops disband,
And Mirth puts on habiliments of woe.

Man's fondest hopes and fairest schemes are laid
In full exposure to thy with'ring pow'r :
These oft, when cherish'd most, thou dost invade,
And blast the toil of years in one short hour.

When brightest burns the fitful flame of life,
When fairest seems the prospect to the view ;
When vict'ry promises to end the strife,
And troubles past fade in the quick review :

Soon as the hand stretch'd forth has seized the cup,
Fill'd to o'erflowing with the promis'd bliss,
And we exulting think to drink it up,
And all our dark foreboding fears dismiss:

Then, in the tumult of triumphant joy,
Upon the very summit of desire,
Thou, unobserv'd approaching dost destroy
The flatt'ring prize—and all our hopes expire.

At first, amazement petrifies the heart,
And spreads its panic thro' the vital stream ;
Till disappointment's agonizing smart
Calls up the spirit from its waking dream.

The vision's flown ! it was a meteor's gleam,
And the rememb'rance sickens all the soul :
It proved, alas ! an unsubstantial dream,
Which held so long its passions in control.

Full oft the scourging blight with fatal pow'r,
As if in scorn of nature and of art,
Inserts its venom in the fairest flow'r,
And bids its beauty and its life depart.

So thou, fell monarch of the horrent shade,
In cruel mockery of human kind,
Dost oft the choicest of the race invade,
And leave the rest, to mourn them lost, behind.

Thy piercing dart divides the silken folds,
Which heart to heart in soft endearments bind ;
And oft life's ever-shifting scene unfolds,
One torn away, one bleeding left behind.

That faded cheek indicts a widow'd heart,
Those sable emblems of a widow's woe
Proclaim that thou hast late perform'd thy part,
And laid her husband and her comfort low.

There wrapt in gloom and stung with poignant grief,
Sits one, whose cup late seem'd without alloy :
He had a wife, in every virtue chief,
But thou hast robb'd him of a husband's joy.

There a young progeny bewail their fate,—
And well they may, for they have felt thy blow ;
They shared parental tenderness of late—
Bereft and parentless they sojourn now.

Near to that grove there liv'd a happy band,
By love's sweet cords together closely knit ;
Heart join'd to heart, and hand enclosed in hand,
Whilst by young hope their lamp of life was lit.

Where are they now ? Alas ! not one is left
T' embalm with tears the memory of the past ;
Their wedded hearts have been asunder reft,
As Autumn leaves are sever'd by the blast.

This was thy work, O king of terrors, Death !

Thy jaundiced eye had mark'd them for their doom
All unexpected, till thy with'ring breath
With force resistless swept them to the tomb.

In fetid caverns, where the pent-up air
Spreads noxious vapours thro' the horrid gloom,
Thou sit'st unseen upon thy regal chair,—
The bold adventurer ent'ring meets his doom.

Or where the miner plies his arduous task,
Deep lodg'd within the bowels of the earth,
Thy hideous visage thou dost oft unmask,
And breathe swift-wing'd destruction blazing forth.

The raging storm is thy triumphal car ;
The booming whirlwind wields thy fatal pow'r ;
Aghast the trav'ller views thee from afar,
Strains ev'ry nerve, but fails t' escape thine hour.

O'er the torn bosom of the mighty deep,
Thou rid'st enthron'd upon the furious storm ;
Hungry sea-monsters do thy vigils keep,
Waves, shoals, and hidden rocks, thy work perform.

Sometimes promiscuously thy shafts are flung
In gen'ral havoc thro' a fated land ;
In one huge mass are hurl'd both old and young,
Nor rich, nor poor, thy ravages withstand.

Unceasing wailings follow in thy train,
And thy career exempts no realm of earth :
Nature in sackcloth mourns her children slain,
As if in anguish of a second birth.

But thou art doom'd ! yea, thou thyself shalt die !
This sentence, branded on thy leaden brow,
Is His decree who rules earth, air, and sky—
His bared right-hand shall lay thee vanquish'd low.

MORNING.

Ox the fair brow of Morn the zephyrs are playing,
As she bounds o'er the marge of the far-distant east ;
At each step in her progress new graces displaying,
Auspicious to man, to bird, and to beast.

On the wings of enchantment I hasten'd to meet her,
To inhale from her breath the true balsam of health :
The dew on her lips, than nectar is sweeter,
The gift she bestows is more precious than wealth.

How rich is her bounty ! her gifts are all free ;
Caprice and injustice ne'er tarnish her sway :
But when thou dost woo her, take temperance with
thee,
Or, mark me ! indignant, she'll scourge thee away.

THE END.



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